CAMP WHITE GRENADE II

"Preserving the Past for the Future"

MARCH 1943

JUNE 2007

Honoring the 299th Engineer Combat Battalion

Last fall, long-time Town of Tonawanda resident Mike Accordino approached me regarding plans for the 63rd reunion of the U.S. Army's 299th Combat Engineer Battalion at Fort Niagara. Mr. Accordino noted that members of the 299th were predominately New Yorkers and all inducted at Fort Niagara. Therefore, he suggested the part of the roadway leading to Fort Niagara be dedicated to the 299th.

I thought Mr. Accordino's suggestion was a great one. Fort Niagara itself has a long and distinguished military history that dates back to 1726. This historic military fortress served as a training stationed and active barracks from the Civil War until the last army units were withdrawn in 1962. During World War II, Fort Niagara was the induction center for all of the army recruits who were to become members 299th Combat Engineers Battalion. The battalion's official history notes that "trainloads of men arrived (at Camp White, Oregon) nearly every day- all of them from Fort Niagara, New York, until our strength was built up to battalion level". These men, many of them boyhood friends came from Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Rochester, Auburn, Syracuse, and many small towns in between.

Given the special tie between the 299th and Fort Niagara, I immediately wrote and introduced a bill in Albany to designate portions of the Niagara Thruway and Robert Moses Parkway, beginning at the intersection of the I-90 and River Road in the Town of Tonawanda and ending in Fort Niagara State Park in the Village of Youngstown, as the *299th Engineers Combat Battalion Memorial*. So, as veterans of the 299th gathered at Fort Niagara this June to renew friendships and remember deceased and fallen comrades, the legislation dedicated the roadways to Fort Niagara in their honor was being finalized by the Legislature. That bill, A.10576/S.7329, has now been passed by both houses and is waiting the hope for signature of the Governor.

This dedication is a fitting tribute to the brave soldiers of the 299th Engineers Combat Battalion, whose unparalleled bravery was evidenced by numerous military decorations, which included the Distinguished Unit Citation and Bronze Service Star for each of the following campaigns: Normandy, Northern France; the Rhineland, Ardennes and Central Europe.

Robin Schimminger
www.299thcombatengineers.com

Historical Significance of the 299th Memorial

Fifty years ago, on March 10, 1943, 60 young men left Auburn to serve their country and, as though fate had decreed it, they were assigned to the same unit – the 299th Combat Engineers Battalion! They trained together, went overseas together, and endured the ordeals of World War II together.

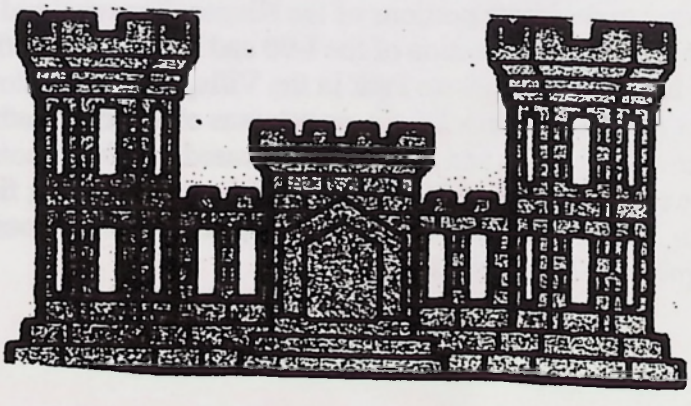
On D-Day, June 6, 1944, as members of the American invasion forces, they faced their greatest challenge – the landings on the beach of Normandy. They were among the first ashore and suffered heavy casualties; the 299th lost 64 men on that momentous day and many more were wounded.

Among the fatalities were 6 local men: Nicholas DeAngelis, John Spinelli, Leo Indelicato, Thomas Phillips, Claude Brown and Lawrence Roberts.

The Memorial will honor the memory of these brave men and assure their families and their comrades that they are not forgotten.

Each year on the Friday closest to June 6th, a short prayer service is held at the monument. In addition to the family members of the deceased, many former 299ers attend this service on their way to the annual reunion held in a nearby city.

The original 299th Battalion was activated in March 1943 with over 600 men from upstate New York, thus the reunions are held in that area.



Commanders Corner

We are proud to put these stories about the different Camp White Units that trained here at Camp White, in our News Letter. We encourage our subscribers to keep the stories coming and we will do the best we can to print them for you.

Your Membership assists in our efforts to provide, "The Camp White Historical Association with a Museum that preserves the history of Camp White, and the Military Units that trained here from 1942 to 1946. Please feel free to reach us at the Associations website at:

www.campwhite.org

Our Italian friends over in Italy help represent the 91st Division every Memorial Day at the Cemetaries in Italy, in addition take care of the three Regimental Monuments in the old country. We extend our appreciation to them for their continued help to preserve the history of WWII.

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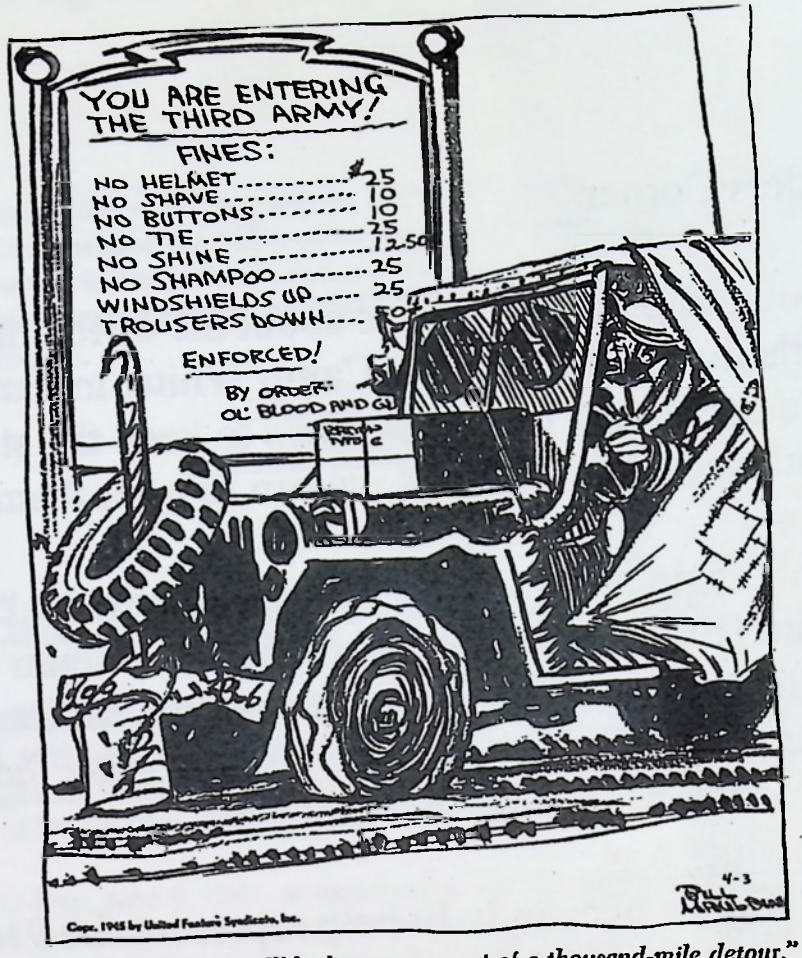
Please Mail all contributions ideas or Appropriate events to P.O. box 2373 White City, Or. 97503

Camp White Station Hospital After 65 years lives on

VA Proposes Major Rebuilding at White City Facility

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary James Nicholson has proposed expanding the Southern Oregon drug and alcohol treatment facility located in White City, formerly known as "The Dom." Nicholson noted that veterans, in large numbers, are among the retirees and others moving to the Southern Oregon region.

Plans for the expansion include a new residential rehabilitation building and demolition of some older buildings on the 145-acre campus. The facility currently has about 400 patients and serves approximately 11,000 to 12,000 individuals as outpatients, and also serves many homeless and mentally ill veterans.



"Radio th' ol' man we'll be late on account of a thousand-mile detour."

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